

methods and machinery required. But in this discussion of methods and means and higher education, Dr. Huntington did not forget to call strongly to our attention the fact, perhaps too often forgotten, that each patient is not only a "case," but that he is a human being and to be so considered. With the introduction of higher educational work and standards we have, perhaps, come to place too high a value on the scientific consideration of the "case" and to forget, in some measure, the patient as a human entity.

The January issue of the American Medical Association Bulletin is quite a remarkable document. It is devoted to a statement of the work and the range

#### ASSOCIATION BULLETIN.

of activities of the Council on Health and Public Instruction,

and all the sub-committees that were combined with and put under the control of this Council. The Secretary of the Council, Dr. Frederick R. Green, is to be highly complimented upon the manner in which he has brought order out of all these chaotic elements and upon the large amount of most valuable educational work that is being continuously done by the Council through his office. It is utterly foolish and hopeless for us to expect any general public health legislation until the people have learned the necessity for it. It is worse than useless for us to try to secure such legislation by sending people to Washington; the demand must come from the people, and it will only come when they know what they need and why they need it. It was one of the wisest things ever done, when the news bureau of the Council was started and when news items of general interest, but of an educational public health nature, were prepared and sent to the newspapers. A lecture bureau is being organized, the idea being to have competent physicians give a number of public addresses in every state, letting the people know exactly what they can do for their own betterment and protection by securing proper public health legislation. Drop a line to the Association, 535 Dearborn avenue, Chicago, and ask for this "Public Education Number" of the Bulletin; it will surprise you to see the range of work that the Association is doing through the Council on Health and Public Instruction.

Nearly every publication in this country has commented, editorially, on the *Titanic* disaster.

In its magnitude and in the short space of time which elapsed between supposedly the best that life has in it and ob-

livion, it was so great that, naturally, but few words of all those printed are worth more than passing notice. One exceedingly good expression of opinion is to be found in *Printers' Ink*, a trade publication dealing with advertising and advertisers. The argument of the article in *Printers' Ink* is that the calamity was directly due to a senseless desire on the part of the steamship company to get a lot of free advertising for itself by making a record run for the class of ship of the

*Titanic*. Undoubtedly, had the ship come in on the time she was making, the newspapers would have printed columns and columns of articles on the ship, her record, her luxuries, etc. "The terrible tragedy of the *Titanic* was due primarily to a false conception of advertising." "This is not the first time that human life has been the price of this wickedly wrong idea of advertising. How many lives have been lost in automobile races? How long would such races exist if the newspapers refused to donate space to them and referred the manufacturers to the regular, paid-for advertising columns?"

Why should you skip this editorial even if it does concern the subject of fee-splitting? If you

are a "splitter," read it just to see what we have to say; if you are a worthy member of the profession in spite of the handicap of refusing to resort to

the practice, you surely will be interested. Ever so often there creeps into our literature a word here or there decrying the medical commission habit, but who has seemed to care? The few kind words here and now indited are an effort to bring home to the consciousness, not the conscience, of some of us that it is high time to care, nay, it is imperative to care, lest smugness be our undoing. Listen! A certain person named Dosch, who rakes muck for a living, has written some most engaging stuff in *Pearson's Magazine* concerning the habit, or let us call it the addiction, of a large number of the medical profession to fee-splitting. One likes to approach these sorts of diatribes with nares plugged. With that precaution taken, the thing is well worth reading, for while it reeks necessarily of muck, it reeks as strongly of truth, and we believe that when we say truth is not always pleasant, the remark is not original. Hearken! To be discovered is nothing new with us, but to be given effective publicity along these distasteful lines will be a rather novel experience. Now that the subjects of political graft, the eternal foulness of ill-gotten wealth, the disgrace of the sweatshops, etc., are well nigh exhausted, what more natural than that the self-constituted literary reformers should turn to us and our weaknesses? Where can field be found more fruitful? The thing can be averted and should be averted before we are held up as the pretty specimens we should appear. Let us clean house while there is yet time. Let our leading men, some of whom have erred habitually in the matter of fee-splitting, cease their malevolent nefariousness and stand up in attitude militant for the right. Let their militancy be as energetic in this regard as it is in some matters of our printed "ethics." We recall at least one locally eminent member of our profession, who in the old days of the graft prosecution was loud in raising his voice for civic virtue, but who probably that day or a few days before, and certainly afterward, split fees. There are others of us who shout loudly for Roosevelt under the idea that he may be pre-eminently the apostle for all kinds of honesty and decency, but pretty clowns we should appear if our account

books were microscopically searched! Call a halt on anything that is not regular beyond cavil, lest we be made thoroughly ridiculous, and to be that is frightful.

In April the newspapers announced that a shortage had been discovered in the accounts of the Secretary of the State Board of Medical Examiners. The facts of the case seem to be that until very recently the business of the various departments of the state were run in a haphazard manner, each doing about as it pleased and without sufficient business organization or audit. The recently created Board of Control started in to examine all these state activities. In the case of the Board of Examiners, they found that everything was correct so far as the record of names of those admitted, licensed or rejected was concerned; they found that the record of these names showed that all applicants had paid their fee. But they found that a number of cases had occurred in which the name and the fee had not been entered in the cash book. This seems to have been due to a very careless system of receipting and of book-keeping which has now been entirely corrected. The Secretary of the Board did not dispute the errors, which are readily explainable on the ground of oversight, and at once paid in sufficient to make up the required balance. It is very unfortunate that such a careless system should have been allowed to exist, but we take much comfort from the fact that the very searching examination disclosed no instance of irregularity in the affairs of the board so far as examinations, licensing, etc., are concerned.

#### A SECRETARY'S VIEWS ON DUES.

In view of the fact that membership dues in most of our county societies are payable in advance, it would seem rational to suppose that members would be only too glad to remit the amount of their indebtedness immediately upon receipt of their society's bill. Nevertheless, getting members to pay their dues has been for many years the most arduous task of the county society secretaries. The San Francisco County Medical Society, up to a little over two years ago, employed a regular collector, who made it his business to stir up the careless and hold-back variety until the dues were paid, and he pocketed 20% as his fee. While a collector, who can be put off from month to month, may appeal to a certain class, the Secretary of the San Francisco County Medical Society felt that the expenditure of 20% was an unnecessary loss, which if continued would eventually mean the raising of the dues by just that amount. He therefore adopted the plan of writing personal letters to delinquents, phoning to others, and in general, getting them to realize the error of their ways. The Society meets four times a month; it maintains a library worthy of far more general use; it pays rent and hires a stenographer and clerk and an assistant librarian; it has in the past prosecuted illegal practitioners. In addition, it pays four dol-

lars per member to the State Society, so that members of the County Society are ipso facto members of the latter, are entitled to medical defense and the other advantages of membership.

Quite recently the Los Angeles County Medical Association adopted a by-law which required members to pay their dues within two months or be suspended. The Secretary of the San Francisco County Medical Society immediately introduced a similar by-law which his Society quite readily accepted. The plan has worked well. The first day that the suspension went into effect but thirty-seven members were thereby affected out of a total of 557 members, a number surprisingly small as compared with what it would have been three, two or even one year ago. Most members receiving suspension notices immediately forwarded checks, many accompanied by notes of apology for "pure carelessness, I assure you," "oversight on my part," etc. A few, meeting the Secretary, expressed themselves as "very sore," and one promised his resignation. The latter when informed that a suspended member could be fired, but could not resign, promptly sent his check. He was furthermore told that if he did resign, his real reason would be published, and finally, seeing the humor of the situation, he wanted to know "who else had got mad."

Judging from the following letter, one would believe that the writer was a very bellicose gentleman, five years past the scrapping age. As a matter of fact, the writer probably knew how the Secretary enjoys this style of literature and wished to vary the otherwise monotonous perusal of his daily mail. The letter follows:

"Dear Bine:

"First time I ever heard of such a rule and why was I the first to get it? I have talked with others who did not get it. First I had a mind to fight it through the courts if necessary, and five years ago would have done so with pleasure and made it be given up. Guess I must be getting mellow with age.

Sincerely,  
\_\_\_\_\_."

Seeing that the by-law was published in the program two consecutive months, then passed by the Society and again published for two consecutive months, it is of course unbelievable that members could overlook it.

It may be stated that as a result of the by-law, the Secretary's work is somewhat lighter, and should really be far more satisfactory to all concerned. Anybody, however, with a keen sense of humor, wishing to send facetious missives to the Secretary will confer a favor upon him by giving vent to their mirth.

R. B.

#### CONVULSIONS IN MEDICAL COLLEGES.

Let us first consider the most recent and violent attack of "reorganization fever" and then the various milder manifestations that have occurred in the last very few years in our medical schools. When the members of the Faculty of the Medical Department of the University of California scanned the morning papers of April 10th, they learned that the school had been entirely reor-